Upgradation of Cochin Port

*337. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is considering to upgrade the Cochin Port; and

(b) whether his Ministry is aware of a request that Cochin Port be reclassified as ''Category A'' Port?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The Government is aware of requests regarding upgradation of Cochin Port as Category I Port from Category II. The Government is examining a proposal for abolition of such categorization of major ports on the basis of the report of a Committee constituted for this purpose.

Captive coal reserves to private companies

†*338. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a decision has been taken to entrust the captive coal reserves to private companies for mining;

(b) if so, the number of companies entrusted with captive coal mines for mining work, so far; and

(c) the provision for taking action against these companies in the event of not doing the mining work satisfactorily?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. As per the provisions of the Coal Mines (Nationalisaton) Act, 1973, an Indian company engaged in power generation, iron and steel manufacturing, production of cement, syn gas through coal gasification and coal liquefaction and such other end-uses as may be notified by the Central Government from time to time, can do mining of coal for captive use only.

(b) Till date 70 coal blocks with reserves of approximately 10.64 billion tonnes have been allocated to 78 private companies.

(c) Forfeiture of the bank guarantee furnished by the allocattee in case of failure to adhere to the schedule of progress for development of coal block and deallocation of block can be resorted to in such cases.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.